



UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING
IN ENHANCING COMMUNICATION :
AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY**

NOR 'AZAH BINTI A. AZIZ

M Ed. TESL

APRIL 2006

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Praise to Allah S.W.T, the Most Gracious, Most Merciful, by His Will had permitted me to complete the writing of this dissertation even after all the problems and difficulties faced.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and deep appreciation to my respected supervisor Mr. Elangkeeran Sabapathy, for his wise and valuable guidance, constructive criticism and patience in guiding me through this study. With his persistent guidance and close attention to my study, I was able to complete this research project within two years.

My special thanks to the Principal of Kuala Jengal Secondary School, Tn. Hj. Ibrahim b. Embong and the Senior Assistant for allowing me to conduct the study in the school.

Special thanks too for the teachers and students of Form Five for their undivided attention and cooperation during the classroom instruction.

Last but not least, I would like to thank those who have contributed to the completion of this dissertation in one way or another. I really appreciate all of you. Thank you again.

ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini ialah untuk mengetahui keberkesanan penggunaan kaedah dan teknik 'cooperative learning' dalam meningkatkan keupayaan berkomunikasi di kalangan pelajar-pelajar luar bandar. Ujian pra dan pos telah dijalankan dalam kumpulan kajian. Selain dari itu juga, soal selidik telah dijalankan untuk mengetahui pendapat dan pandangan pelajar-pelajar dalam kumpulan tersebut dan pandangan beberapa orang guru tentang penggunaan kaedah dan teknik 'cooperative learning' dalam proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran. Keputusan kajian pada ujian pos menunjukkan bahawa kumpulan kajian telah menghasilkan pencapaian yang memberangsangkan dalam proses berkomunikasi samada mereka diuji secara individu atau dalam kumpulan. Apabila dibandingkan ujian pos individu and ujian pos pelajar tersebut di dalam kumpulan, ternyata keputusan di dalam kumpulan adalah jauh lebih baik. Secara keseluruhannya, markah ujian pos mereka telah meningkat, jauh berbeza jika dibandingkan dengan ujian pra. Ini sekaligus membuktikan bahawa teknik 'cooperative learning' menghasilkan kesan positif dalam peningkatan pencapaian pelajar luar Bandar terhadap pembelajaran bahasa kedua.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find the effectiveness of using cooperative learning strategies in enhancing communication among rural students. A pre-test and post-tests were conducted on a particular group of students in this research project. In addition, questionnaires was administered to find the teachers' and students' opinion on the use of cooperative learning in the teaching and learning process. The findings of this study revealed that the experimental group performed better in their post-test individually or in their group. In spite of this, when their performance as individual were compared to their performance in the group, it showed that their performance in groups were better. Overall, their score for post-test increased compared to their pre-test. It proved that cooperative learning strategies have a certain degree of influence on the students' academic performance. It also showed that this student-centered approach can give positive results to the rural students, to improve their performance in second language learning.

CHAPTER ONE : BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction.

Many people believe that at the beginning stages of language learning, before students come across the language in its written form, they developed knowledge of words and structures through repeatedly hearing these words in their environment. This is how little children learn their own mother tongue. In monolingual classes teachers may find that students will readily revert to using the mother tongue in the execution of fluency activities. Indeed they may refuse to use the target language at all, if not under scrutiny by the teacher. Some of the reasons for this problem include; firstly, social unease at using a target language with their peers; secondly, perceiving the task as being difficult to complete in the target language; and finally, becoming so involved in the task that there is a genuine need to use the quickest and easiest way of communicating about the solution, i.e. their mother tongue.

Thus, to overcome this problem, the teachers will have to be selective in deciding which suitable teaching technique to use in order to enhance students' understanding in a particular lesson. In searching for a suitable method, the teacher should always answer questions like 'Why are we using this methods?', 'Does it benefit the students?', 'Where is our evidence?' Methods should be chosen to accommodate the environment in which students can learn effectively. There are many ways in which teachers can improve students' understanding in the classroom. Teachers could help to influence the students' approach by providing the right kind of learning experience. The use of group-based activities can maximize the use of skills through interaction. Groups can provide a place where subject material can be fully engaged with, processed and integrated into the learner's pre-existing concept of reality. Interpersonal skills can also be practiced and could be learnt in 'real life' situations. Peer feedback can be received and given in ways that are often more effective than feedback from teachers. I can see the situation in my school during arts class where the students really enjoy learning if their friends correct their mistakes. They feel safe being corrected by peers rather than the teacher points out